

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2120

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VE, CU, US

SUBJECT: CALDERA RULES OUT RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA

BUT DEFENDS HIS INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY

REF: CARACAS 10599 AND 10691; STATE 235702

SUMMARY: IN HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE THE ELECTIONS
PRESIDENT CALDERA VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED HIS INDEPENDENT FOREIGN
POLICY BUT ANNOUNCED HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT REESTABLISH
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA, THE IMMINENCE OF WHICH HAD
BEEN WIDELY FORECAST HERE.
END SUMMARY.

1. AT HIS WEEKLY PRESS CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 13 (FIRST
SINCE THE DECEMBER 9 NATIONAL ELECTIONS) PRESIDENT CALDERA
REFERRED TO PRESIDENT-ELECT PEREZ'S STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS
EARLIER THIS WEEK TO THE EFFECT THAT VENEZUELA SHOULD NOT
TAKE A UNILATERAL DECISION TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH CUBA
(PARA 3 CARACAS 10599 AND PARA 2 CARACAS 10691). CALDERA
SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD SOUGHT WITHIN THE OAS FRAMEWORK
FREEDOM FOR LA COUNTRIES TO HAVE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH
CUBA AND HAD STATED THAT, IF THIS FAILED, IT WOULD BE FORCED
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TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISION IN THIS RESPECT. CALDERA SAID HE

BELIEVED FRIENDSHIP IS PREFERABLE TO HOSTILITY BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND CUBA, AND THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER "FOR EACH COUNTRY TO RECOGNIZE ITS ROLE WITHIN THE GREAT LATIN AMERICA RESPONSIBILITY AND SEEK A SOLUTION TO SUCH PROBLEMS AS THE HIGHJACKING OF AIRCRAFT AND THE LACK OF CERTAIN ARTICLES OF PRIME NECESSITY." "BUT", HE CONTINUED, "I MUST RESPECT THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE NEXT PRESIDENT, AND I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE A RISK I HAVE NO RIGHT TO RUN NOR TO IMPOSE ON THE COUNTRY TO PRECIPITATE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WHOSE OUTCOME BEYOND MARCH 1974 I DO NOT KNOW/"

2. LATER IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE CALDERA COMMENTED THAT HE FELT IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO ABANDON THE "BETANCOURT DOCTRINE" SINCE IT HAD NOT RECEIVED WIDESPREAD SUPPORT IN LATIN AMERICA, AND VENEZUELA DID NOT WISH TO BECOME ISOLATED ON THIS ISSUE. CALDERA STATED HE HAD THEREFORE FORMULATED HIS CONCEPT OF "PLURALIST SOLIDARITY" BY WHICH EACH COUNTRY ACTS IN ITS OWN WAY. CALDERA SAID HE BELIEVED THIS POLICY WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY THE NEW PRESIDENT. CALDERA RECALLED HE HAD DELIBERATELY BUT WITHOUT EITHER HASTE OR DELAY ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, WITHOUT ILL EFFECTS FOR VENEZUELA. HE SAID THAT IT SEEMS THIS POLICY WILL ALSO CONTINUE.

3. CALDERA SAID THAT IN THE CONDUCT OF VENEZUELA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS HE HAD SOUGHT TO FOLLOW A "POLICY OF SOVEREIGNTY," WHOSE "MOST TANGIBLE DEMONSTRATION WAS THE UNILATERAL DENUNCIATION OF THE RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT" WITH THE US, "WHICH FOR SEVERAL YEARS HAD APPEARED TO BE THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE FOR VENEZUELA TO PURSUE ITS OWN ECONOMIC POLICY." CALDERA SAID THAT BOTH PRESIDENTS BETANCOURT AND LEONI HAD ANNOUNCED ON TAKING OFFICE THAT THEY WOULD SEEK TO MODIFY THE AGREEMENT, BUT THAT HE HAD DECIDED, AFTER VISITING WASHINGTON AND RAISING THE MATTER, THAT HE HAD TO TAKE A "CLEAR AND EASY DECISION," AND HAD SUMMONED THE US AMBASSADOR (SIC) AND INFORMED HIM OF VENEZUELA'S DECISION TO END THE AGREEMENT. "THIS WAS A SYMBOLIC ACT OF A POLICY WHICH I BELIEVE ALL VENEZUELA DEEPLY SHARES, AND THEREFORE I BELIEVE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO HAVE TO MAINTAIN IT."

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4. COMMENT: DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE CALDERA WAS UNUSUALLY ANIMATED, AND HIS STATEMENTS COMPRISED A SPIRITED DEFENSE OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. HIS REMARKS ON HIS CONDUCT OF VENEZUELA'S FOREIGN POLICY SEEM TO BE A RESPONSE TO THE IMPLICATION THAT AD'S STUNNING VICTORY CONSTITUTED A REJECTION OF HIS FOREIGN (AND DEOMESTIC) POLICIES. CALDERA'S RULING OUT OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA DURING THE REMAINDER OF HIS ADMINISTRATION FINALLY ENDS THE LONG, PAINFUL VACILLATION BY THE GOV

OVER THIS MATTER.
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